

THE MEASURE

A JOURNAL OF POETRY



Poems by Rolfe Humphries, Genevieve Taggard,
Arthur Davison Ficke, Francis Carlin, Anthony
Wrynn, Louise Bogan, and others — — — —

Miscellany of American Poetry Reviewed — — —

\$2.50 by the Year — — — — — Single Copies 25c

Published Monthly at 449 West 22nd Street, New York, N. Y.

Number 21 — — — — — November, 1922

Entered as second-class matter February 28, 1921, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1876

Contents

POEMS	Page
Prelude. By Anthony Wrynn.....	3
Heat. By Anthony Wrynn.....	4
Orpheus. By Anthony Wrynn.....	4
Seaward. By Anthony Wrynn.....	5
Immortality. By Susanne Howe.....	6
Absence. By Susanne Howe.....	6
Footfalls. By Hazel Hall.....	7
Desert Woman Remembers Her Reasons. By Genevieve Taggard.....	8
The Golden Nickel. By Francis Carlin.....	9
Her Hands. By Arthur Davison Ficke.....	10
Portrait of a Stranger. By Arthur Davison Ficke.....	10
Marcia. By Arthur Davison Ficke.....	11
Ruth. By Arthur Davison Ficke.....	11
Dream Poem. By Ella Holden.....	12
Drowning. By Rolfe Humphries.....	12
Stanza. By Louise Bogan.....	14
Last Hill in a Vista. By Louise Bogan.....	14
IN REVIEW	
Their Own Editors. By Louise Nicholl.....	15
Quiet Colors. By Winifred Welles.....	17

The Measure

A Journal of Poetry

NUMBER 21

NOVEMBER, 1922

Prelude

I have rooted twenty candles
In the gold sockets
And set them among the lilies.
The smell of early morning
Breaks across the altar
From the black open window.
I hear the fitful stir
Of leaves but never look
From the window.

I shall be seen on the stairs.
When the priest has broken
And eaten Christ
I shall come back,
And before the black window
Grows pale
I shall fold the sacred cloth
And smother the lights of the candles.

In the darkness
No one shall hear
My return up the stairs.

Copyright, 1922, by the Editors

Heat

THE cranes stand motionless
On the warm rocks
Where the forest trails down to the dried
Water-course. Shrivelled reeds
Lie flat upon the stones.
Evening drops imperceptibly
Over the breathless valley.

In the night
On the black silent edge of the forest
The cranes still stand motionless
Brooding on their wilting hearts.

The world turns softly.
I can not stir.
A god could not stir.

Orpheus

I have turned back the long panthers
As they passed homeward
To their lovers under the forest.
The leaning boulders
Broke from the cliff-edge
And destroyed themselves before me,
Their hearts roused with my music.

I have turned back the clouds
That pace the evening
And brought them low
About the foot of the mountain.
My head was bound with the glint of birds
Careless of the air,
Careless as the wing-cut winds
That rested under my fingers
Vanquished with music.
The gods sat in the utterance of my lyre.
I was a bright son of the gods.

But tonight I am as a tree
Caught among the rocks,
Sheltered from the tiding of the air.
I strike no sound
With my leafy fingers,
No sound with my boughs
That can bring you back
To the loveliness of the world
With all your splendor around you.

Seaward

I will ride on a white stallion
To your tent. I will be naked
And the beast eager
For the inswing of the foam-flowers.
Like a single cloud
That floats toward the Islands
Peace will sit in my face.
A wreath, and the buds will stir
In little winds from the sea,
I will bring of my last songs
For you in your tent,
For your quiet temples,
O death.

—*Anthony Wrynn*

Immortality

I have been sure today that beauty lives,
Reading the high allegiance of your mind
To Time alone immortal. You were kind
To gallant loveliness that Time forgives,
Serene in pity that was strange to me
Until today. I dared to meet your gaze
And saw, far off, grey lines of days on days
Marching in stillness to a steel-grey sea.
And when for me color and light returned,
For you that grey, relentless splendor burned.
It is a world I shall be glad to know:
I might believe, some day, that beauty dies,
Had I not seen it living, long ago,
Within the tranquil desert of your eyes.

Absence

I have no fear of distance or of days,
Since these are but constructions of the brain
That, when you come, resume their humble ways
And set me free to touch your hand again.
I have no fear of altered points-of-view,
New friends, and places far beyond my reach;
These things are real,—as much a part of you
As the dense texture of your velvet speech.
But there were outlines cut by tops of trees,
And bells that fled in high, discordant tunes,
And broken angles where the sunshine lay
Along the side-streets in the afternoons.
The things that pass—I go in fear of these;
They are not lightly to be swept away.

—*Susanne Howe*

Footfalls

I

LIFE, be my pillow.
Forget, forget, forget
If I once asked for wandering
With never a thought of cold or wet.
Forget, forget, forget, forget
If I once asked for roads that fled
Before resisting tread.
Be nothing for my feet, life;
Be something under my head . . .

II

Motion, motion;
Life is meaningless
Save in its motion.
I will move, blind; I will feel nothingness,
So that, itinerant, I may unwind
Meanings coiled in my feet. And though there be
Only the meaning of futility,
Yet, moving, I shall find
All that is ever found:
Motion, and echoed motion,
Sound . . .

III

The tip of a fir,
And it is colored green,
Over a shiny roof is seen.
And who needs more, even if there were
Something more than the tip of a fir?
And who would think, even if they could,
Of roots and trunks that have stood, have stood
Through—but who would care how many springs—
Even if there were such things?
Over a roof
The feathery green
Tip of a fir
Is seen,
Seen . . .

—Hazel Hall

Desert Woman Remembers Her Reasons

HOW many rivers swerved aside
Rather than take a stony bride.

At my hot breath, they checked their rush
And reared a wave, a head,—and hush
Then fell and fled and would not come
To kiss the color of my loam.

The young bright rivers backed and fought.
And I lay thirsty and unsought.

They married vallies. If I caught
Water in my hand, it seeped . . .
Rivers around—rain over me—leaped;
I was unwatered and unreaped.
Rather than take me for their bride
Rivers and rivers swerved aside
And I grew desolate and died.

They shook their silver manes and curved
Aside. Aside they swerved
Past my dull grandeur. River droves
Dared do no more than pound their hooves
And skirt my sombre purple. White
Galloping cataracts took to flight.

Why have my loins become a stone?
Color of scorn and scorn's tone
Brood over me. I move beneath
Pale dust with an edged breath.
Sliding under cover of sand
I throttle young rivers with a bold hand.

—Genevieve Taggard.

The Golden Nickel

IF I had a nickel
I'd drive the goat's gig
That jolts on the pavement
When crossing a twig:
A buck or a nanny,
No differ at all,
If I were as simple
As those that are small.

And if I had a nickel
I'd ride the grey ass
That jogs on the sidewalk
So near to the grass:
The ass or the pony,
I would not care which,
If I were as simple
As those that are rich.

But Oh! for the nickel
I'd spend in the Park
To canter with Chaucer
And gallant Jeanne d'Arc,
Quixote on his jennet,
And Red Riding Hood;
If I were as simple
As those that are good.

—*Francis Carlin*

Her Hands

MY hands were loved of many, when I was young—
Not for the beauty of the flesh alone—
But, like a harp whose quivering strings had sung
A music that at last became its own,
Their slenderness was eloquent of blood
Seeking a joy not ever manifest.
My lips and eyes never betrayed my mood
As they did. And my lovers from my breast
Sometimes have turned to kiss these hands again
That were to me a perfidy and no prize.
Is happiness so small a thing—? and pain
So great a splendor to a lover's eyes?—
Could they not love my joyousness, but only
My hands—that are so terrible, so lonely?

Portrait of a Stranger

SHE was so young, it seemed that Spring had turned
Earthward to make her before brooks were clear
Of their last ice,—before first blades appear
Of grass, and not one April flower had burned
Its little light under the pale blue sky.
She was so young, I knew she could not know
Anything more than that the wind can blow
Dark violet-blooms to sway most delicately.
But one calm evening, when a quiet star
Was great and luminous above the west,
We talked of what is good and bad and best,
And how the nearest things are the most far,
And how the things-that-are-not chiefly are
I think, now, Spring's old self lives in her breast.

Marcia

MARCIA! . . . Across the glassy twilit pool
I heard your following playmates call your name.
The pale mists parted, and I saw your cool
Delicate figure poise, and like a flame
Shoot out to the dark water, and emerge
Dripping, silent, and smiling, where I stood.
You turned again and leaping from the verge
Swam toward the darkness, leaving me to brood
All evening on your slender arms and hands,
Your shadowy breast, your swiftly flushing face
Some light still glimmers on these somber lands
Where beauty has one moment left its trace
Marcia! someday your lover shall possess
More of you—but no more of loveliness.

Ruth

YOUR pale Egyptian eyelids used to stir
Faintly with laughter when I brought a jest.
You were mysterious as a sepulchre
To my young eyes; and that perhaps was best:
For a dim secret, none too good to know,
Must even then have had its dwelling-place
In your still bosom. I could come and go
Yet never read the silence of your face.
Then on a day the spirit in that tomb
Grew faint, and madness curtained up your eyes
With film on film of desolated gloom
Through which the soul I knew gave no replies—
Until that dawn of strange November rain
When you lay dead, and were yourself again.

—*Arthur Davison Ficke*

Dream Poem

THE beauty of your soul
Is like a hushed melody.
Do you hear the wind
Caressing the dead leaves?

I go to you
Driven by an exquisite compulsion.
Will your unfilled desires
Always haunt me?

Your mouth is a whirlpool of kisses
Riotiously beckoning,
Your eyes are soft veils
Hiding dreams.

I dream of you.
Your hands are so tender
Giving of their pent desires.
Why do you pain me so?

I dream of the dream in you
And your spirit towering
Like a lonely tree in the night.
Sullen, beautiful,

—Ella Holden

Drowning

WILLOWS that bow
Over dark still water
Are quiet now—
In the windless firs
And the tall pines around
No breath stirs
And there's no sound
Under dark still water.

Down deep
Deeper than sight
Where no lights glimmer
A weary swimmer
Has gone tonight
Has gone to sleep.

Little boats loom
In the hushed night
And slower and slower
Row, pause, lower
A long pole with a light
Down through soft gloom
Down to his room
Under dark still water.

Luminous, dim,
The light has found him
Where black fishes swim,
Poise and resume
Their slow course around him.
He rests so wearily
But there's a light in his room
And he rises, eerily,

In slow wonder
Groping, asleep—
Then with a rush
Suddenly up from under
The dim-lit water
To burst the hush
That has gone down deep,
He comes to a boat's side
Oozily dripping.
Arms keep him from slipping.

Was he sleeping there
Under dark still water?
What was he scared about
To make him stare
So wildly open-eyed?
To make his tongue hang out
Like that? — !

—*Rolfe Humphries*

Stanza

NO longer burn the hands that seized
Small wreaths from branches hardly green.
Wearily sleeps the hardy, lean
Hunger that could not be appeased.
The eyes that opened on white day
Watch cloud that men may look upon:
Leda forgets the wings of the swan,
Danaë has swept the gold away.

Last Hill in a Vista

COME, let us tell the weeds in ditches
How we are poor, who once had riches
And lie out in the sparse and sodden
Pastures that the cows have trodden,
The while an autumn night seals down
The comforts of a wooden town.

Come, let us counsel some cold stranger
How we sought safety, but loved danger.
Thus, with stiff walls about us, we
Sought this more fragile boundary:
Hills, where light poplars, the firm oak,
Loosen into a little smoke.

—*Louise Bogan*

The Measure ✻ A Journal of Poetry

Published monthly by the Editors at 449 West 22nd Street, New York

Edited by Kenneth Slade Alling, Joseph Auslander, Padraic Colum, Carolyn Hall, Louise Townsend Nicholl, George O'Neil, Pitts Sanborn, Genevieve Taggard, Winifred Welles. From these nine an acting editor and an assistant are elected quarterly by the board. Associate Editors—Hervey Allen, Maxwell Anderson and Frank Ernest Hill.

ACTING EDITOR: JOSEPH AUSLANDER

Their Own Editors

American Poetry 1922. A Miscellany. Harcourt, Brace & Co., N. Y.

THERE will be someday the value of the historical about this unique group anthology, the second in its biennial series; but it is possible that the delvers will be so taken up with tendencies and discoveries that they will overlook the most important thing of all—that in 1922 such a book was possible, made with friendliness and freedom by some of the best poets in the country, each poet acting as his own editor, choosing from his stuff that which best represented him, and so leaving a more exact record than any other could be of what he was, or thought he was, at that time. And I like the book so much that I find a line of Edna Millay's, in the sonnet which by the correctness of chance is the last one in the book, speaking not only for her but for them all:

I tell you I am what I was and more.

And by the time the delvers read it, that line will in several cases be even truer than it is now.

Just now the book is not valuable for its tendencies and revelations, already known and not yet forgotten; but sheerly for its companioning and its delight, and for the spirit which made it and can be felt. There is something unmistakably right about the way this book was made, something lastingly happy in its effect.

Individualities do not blur or clash through the close contacts; essences are both compressed and liberated, as essences of different-familied petals in a jar.

For everyone there will be specific reasons for thinking the book good. For me the reasons begin on page 25 with Robert Frost and his "Fire and Ice":

Some say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice.
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire.
But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To know that for destruction ice
Is also great,
And would suffice.

The reasons continue with Sandburg's "Windflower leaf" — read it for Sandburg at his most exquisitely delicate and perceptive, as if someone whose fingers have been calloused dares to touch with sensitively tender flesh again; and they go on through Kreymborg's "Peasant", like a red-brown crayon drawing or a sculpture done in soil; through no especial poem of Louis Untermeyer's, but rather his pervasive feeling of impulsions, of restive drive and ache; and past the new strength of Sara Teasdale's "The Solitary". Something evanescent and flowing in her work has crystallized; it can be touched and held to, now. It is not for nothing that she has been so entirely a woman's poet—great wisdom comes of it.

There is John Gould Fletcher's "The Future" with its great last line about the stars,

And, if akin to him, akin in vain,

and Jean Starr Untermeyer's "Mater in Extremis" and the last three stanzas of her "Rescue", and the poems of H. D., perhaps the greatest poems in the book, although, or because, they are the poems of a new H. D.—a more personal, human, and embittered one. There is Conrad Aiken, the sixth of whose "Seven Twilights" gives himself so simply. And there is, in Millay's group of sonnets, that one whose first and last lines I would rather have written than any sonnet lines I know:

Euclid alone has looked on Beauty bare.
 Let all who prate of Beauty hold their peace
 And lay them prone upon the earth and cease
 To ponder on themselves, the while they stare
 At nothing, intricately drawn nowhere
 In shapes of shifting lineage; let geese
 Gabble and hiss, but heroes seek release
 From dusty bondage into luminous air.

O blinding hour, O holy, terrible day,
 When first the shaft into his vision shone
 Of light anatomized! Euclid alone
 Has looked on Beauty bare. Fortunate they
 Who, though once only and then but far away,
 Have heard her massive sandal set on stone.

—Louise Nicholl

Quiet Colors

Sonnets of a Portrait-Painter, by Arthur Davison Ficke. Mitchell Kennerly, New York.

SONNETS of a Portrait-Painter was first published eight years ago. It is reissued this fall with some revisions and omissions, and with the addition of four new groups, "Don Quixote", "Rue des Vents", "The Middle Years", and "Epitaph for the Poet V".

The *Sonnets of a Portrait-Painter*, it will be remembered, told a story of modern love, its finding and taking and losing. Among those, still retentive of their old glamour, one rereads with pleasure, "November Dusk", "Retrospect", and the rapturous "I am in love with high, far-seeing places", which I designate by its first line because the title, "View from Heights", seems to me singularly unimaginative.

Never tempted by the morbid or bizarre, Mr. Ficke's more recent work remains like his earlier accomplishment, essentially sane and fair, growing only in the mellowness of tone, its lyrical joyousness deepening to a grave and quiet wonder.

I can more tranquilly behold the stars
 Than once I could—

he muses with graceful sadness in one of the sonnets in "The Middle Years". And this maturer mood, one less for song than for soliloquy, is even more evident in "Don Quixote" and the "Epitaph for the Poet V", which seem less personal, and, perhaps for that reason, touched with a

somewhat paler passion. In the group called "Rue des Vents" there is also impersonality, but it is not the detachment of troubled thought. It is more the withdrawal of a dreamer into his own marble dream, where, like a figure in a fountain, he hears voices and running feet, sees shapes and hues, but only through the transfiguration of mist. The atmosphere of meditative melancholy is successfully invoked in this first sonnet.

It was an old house and there seemed to live
Along its mousey corridors still a gloom
Of lives long-cancelled. In my quiet room
Among my books, I could hear fugitive
Hesitant faint intrusions that withdrew
Before they entered to my presence there.
The very light was thick, and on the stair
The darkness glowed and flickered. So I knew
I was at home here; for on every side
Beyond these walls life to me thus had seemed
Always a hush where ancient voices hide—
A dusk where candles had but lately gleamed—
A masque of those who went and us who bide—
A dream that many another ghost has dreamed.

It is difficult and hardly fair to quote because, after all, the charm of this poetry does not lie so much in single poems as in an elusive richness which, pollen-like, sifts through the pages of the whole. It is this pervasive quality of gold which almost enables one to ignore altogether that, individually, these sonnets are tasteful rather than arresting, woven rather than hewn. But if Mr. Ficke is not a poet to dazzle or inflame, if his light is too tranquil to be shed otherwise than tenderly, he is still a poet, and because his poetry is the garland of the worshipper rather than the altar of the god, it is no less of value—or so it seems to me.

—Winifred Welles.

CONTRIBUTORS

Only four contributors are new to us. Mr. Ficke is well-known. Ella Holden and Anthony Wrynn are both young and both New Yorkers. Rolfe Humphries is a pupil in Genevieve Taggard's verse-writing class in San Francisco, and also teaches in a boys' school.

EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Kenneth Slade Alling has been elected to fill the ninth place on the active editorial board of *The Measure*.

Several months ago, a young Scotchman came to the *Measure* office, with a batch of poems and a story of his recent illness and misfortunes caused by the war. It seemed evident that he was still suffering from shock. He gave his name as Daniel McLean. We published one of the poems which he brought us, "Hopes", in the June number of the magazine, and gave a brief account of him in the contributors' notes. We have just learned that a poem written by someone else was taken by him, with a great many other poems, to another magazine in New York, and sold by him as his own. We do not know that the poem we printed was not his own, but it seems necessary for us to call attention to the fact that such a poem was published by us.

By some inexcusable carelessness of the editors, the name of the author of three submitted poems, "Building Operations", "Flash", and "Quiet and Darkness" has been lost. If the author sees this note, will he please send us his name and, if possible, duplicate copies of the poems?

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, OF THE MEASURE, A JOURNAL OF POETRY, PUBLISHED MONTHLY AT NEW YORK, N. Y., FOR OCTOBER 1, 1922.

State of New York,)
County of New York,) ss.

Before me, a Notary Public, in and for the State and County aforesaid, personally appeared Carolyn Hall, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes, and says that she is the business manager of *The Measure, A Journal of Poetry*, and that the following is, to the best of her knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are:

Publishers—Joseph Auslander, Padraic Colum, Carolyn Hall, Louise Townsend Nicholl, George O'Neil, Pitts Sanborn, Genevieve Taggard, Winifred Welles—449 West 22nd Street, New York, N. Y.

Managing Editor—None.

Editor—Joseph Auslander—449 West 22nd Street, New York, N. Y.

Business Manager—Carolyn Hall—449 West 22nd Street, New York, N. Y.

2. That the owners are: (Give names and addresses of individual owners, or, if a corporation, give its name and the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 per cent. or more of the total amount of stock.)

Joseph Auslander, George O'Neil, Padraic Colum, Pitts Sanborn, Carolyn Hall, Genevieve Taggard, Louise Townsend Nicholl, Winifred Welles—All at 449 West 22nd Street, New York, N. Y.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent. or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities: (If there are none, so state.)

None.

CAROLYN HALL, Business Manager.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 11th day of October, 1922.

FRANK E. HALL

(My Commission expires March 30, 1923.)

The Measure

A Journal of Poetry

ACTIVE EDITORIAL BOARD

Kenneth Slade Alling	Carolyn Hall	Pitts Sanborn
Joseph Auslander	Louise Townsend Nicholl	Genevieve Taggard
Padraic Colum	George O'Neil	Winifred Welles

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Hervey Allen, Maxwell Anderson and Frank Ernest Hill

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY

THE EDITORS

at

449 West 22nd Street, New York City

Subscription \$2.50 a year

Single copies 25 cents

WHERE THE MEASURE IS ON SALE

Brentano's	Fifth Avenue and 27th Street, New York City
Frank Shay's Bookshop.....	4 Christopher Street, New York City
The Washington Square Bookshop.....	27 West 8th Street, New York City
The Sunwise Turn, Inc.....	51 East 44th Street, New York City
Liberty Tower Bookshop.....	Liberty and Nassau Streets, New York City
The Little Book Store.....	51 East 60th Street, New York City

SCHENECTADY

The Dutch Oven in Dorp

45 Washington Avenue

BOSTON

Smith & McCance
Old Corner Bookstore
The Studio Bookshop

2 Park Street
27 Bromfield Street
198 Dartmouth Street

CLEVELAND

Richard Laukluff, Bookseller

CHICAGO

Kroch's

The Walden Book Shop

Fanny Butcher's Bookshop

DETROIT

The Clarion

2705 Woodward Avenue

BERKELEY, CALIF.

Sather Gate Bookshop

SAN FRANCISCO

Paul Elder & Co.

MINNEAPOLIS

Mabel Ulrich's Bookstore

WASHINGTON, D. C.

Brentano's

PARIS

Shakespeare and Company,
12 rue de l'Odeon

LONDON

Hendersons:

Wholesale and Retail Agents,
66 Charing Cross Road, W. C. 2